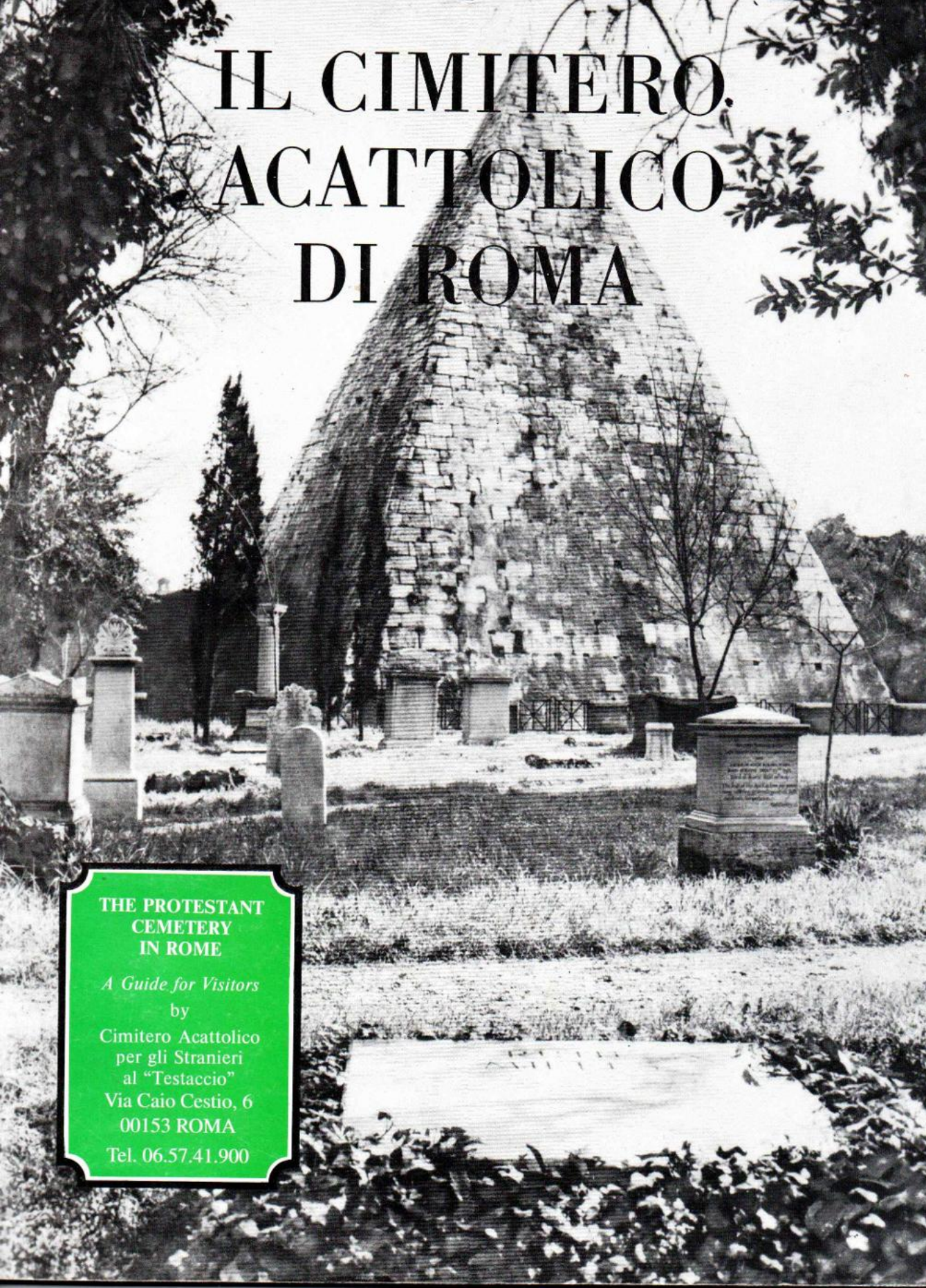
IL CIMITERO ACATTOLICO DI ROMA



THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY IN ROME

A Guide for Visitors

by

Cimitero Acattolico
per gli Stranieri
al "Testaccio"
Via Caio Cestio, 6
00153 ROMA
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THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY
IN ROME

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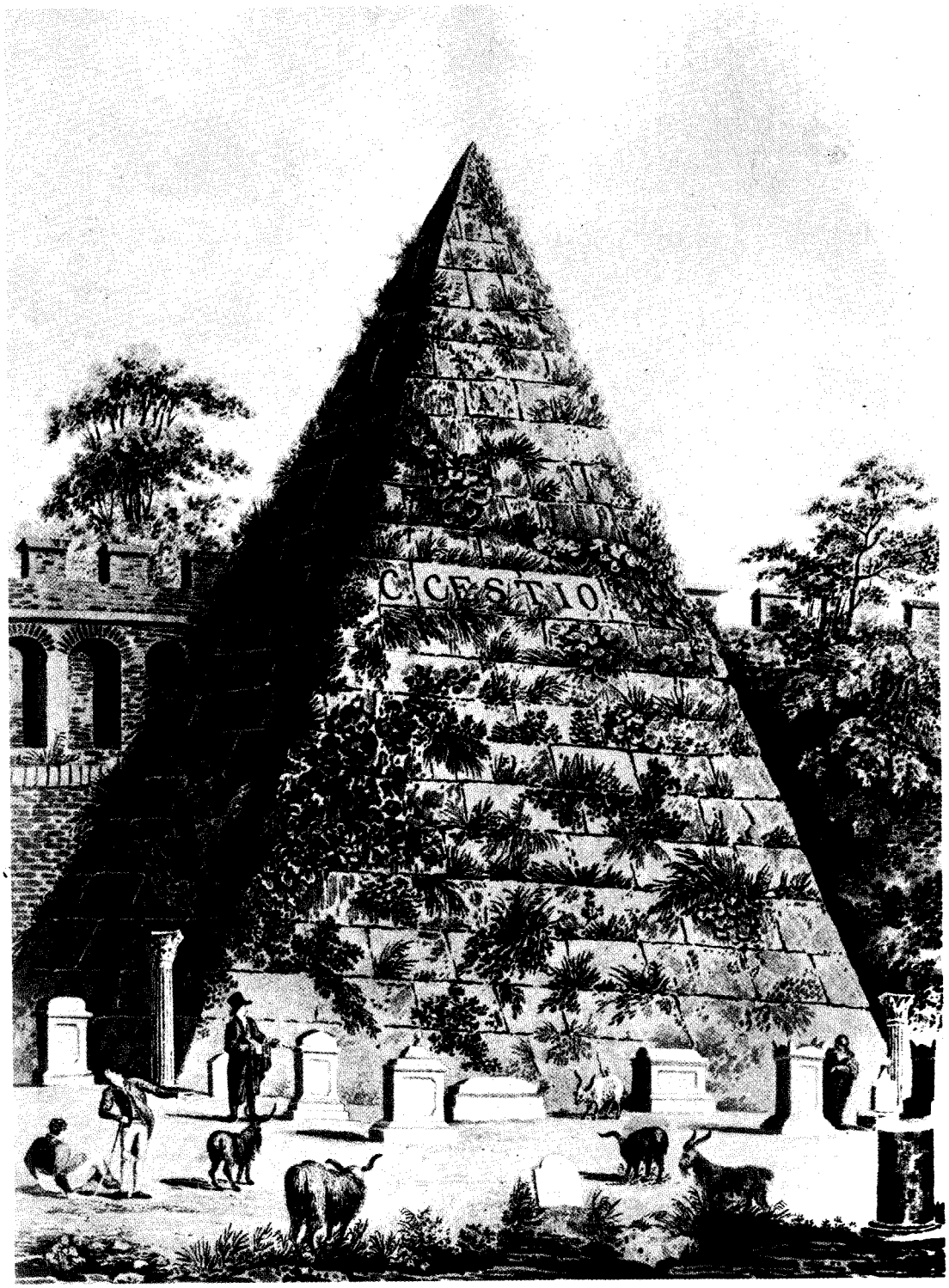


The Cestius Pyramid with some of the oldest tombs of the Cemetery at its foot. Engraving by H. Abbott 1820.

THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY IN ROME

The Cemetery of Artists and Poets

by

Johan Beck-Friis

ALLHEMS FÖRLAG
PUBLISHING HOUSE * MALMÖ, SWEDEN

Nocturnal funeral at the Protestant Cemetery. Aquatinta-engraving after an original by B. Pinelli 1811.

THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY IN ROME

This Cemetery is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful and impressive in the world. It was called in its earliest days the "Cimitero acattolico" or "Cimitero degli acattolici al Testaccio." It is now perhaps most commonly known as "The Protestant Cemetery", though we also hear it called "The British" or "The Testaccio" or described as "The Cemetery of poets and artists." Monte Testaccio is the name of the small nearby hill, which, as the name indicates, is a mound of potsherds. How these came to accumulate to such a volume in a single spot is a subject upon which scholars still disagree. A number of theories have been presented, but none seems to have gained general approval.

The regulations for the governance of this venerable burying ground, which were codified in 1921, stated that it was reserved for the use of certain countries for the interment of their citizens of Protestant or Orthodox faith. In 1953 the regulations were modified: the words "citizens of Protestant or Orthodox faith" were replaced by the words "non-Catholic citizens" with the purpose of giving a more liberal interpretation to the rules. Even to Roman Catholics the Cemetery is not entirely barred, for a member of the Church of Rome may be buried in a gravebelonging to some non-Catholic member of his family.

Nearly four thousand persons have gone to their last rest here. They are mainly of English and German birth but there are also a number of Americans, Scandinavians, Russians, Greeks, and persons of other nationalities, including a few Chinese and

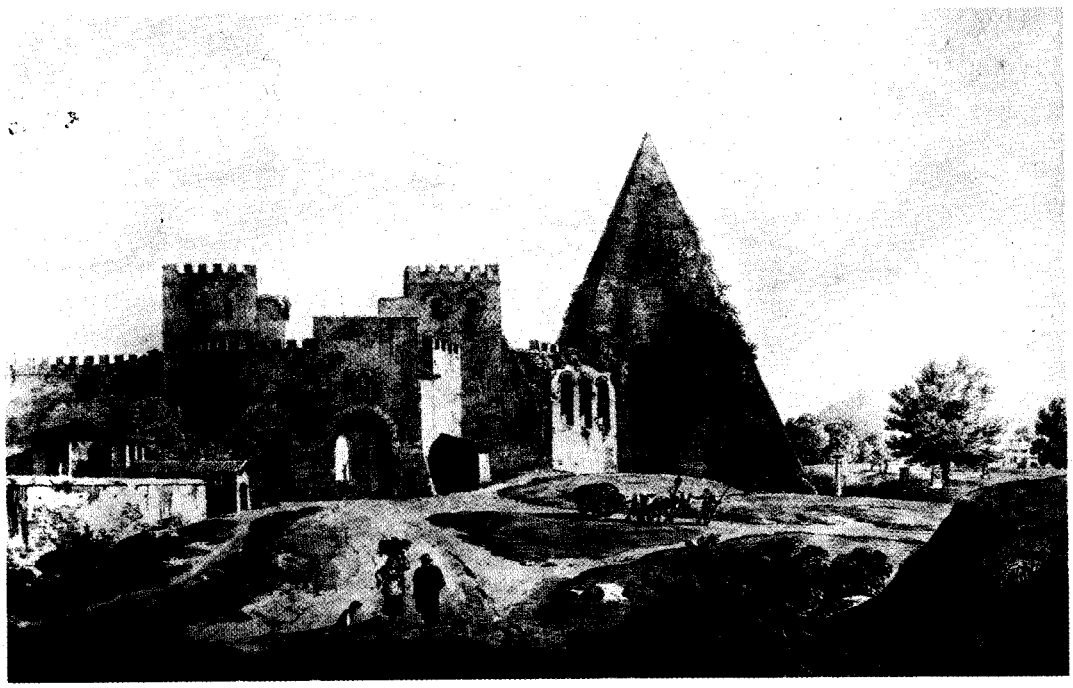
other Asiatics. The number of Italians resting in the Cemetery is also surprisingly large. These generally seem to have chosen their last resting-place here because they wanted to sleep in the same grave as relatives who preceded them. For some Italians, the family tie is evidently a stronger bond in uniting them than that of religion.

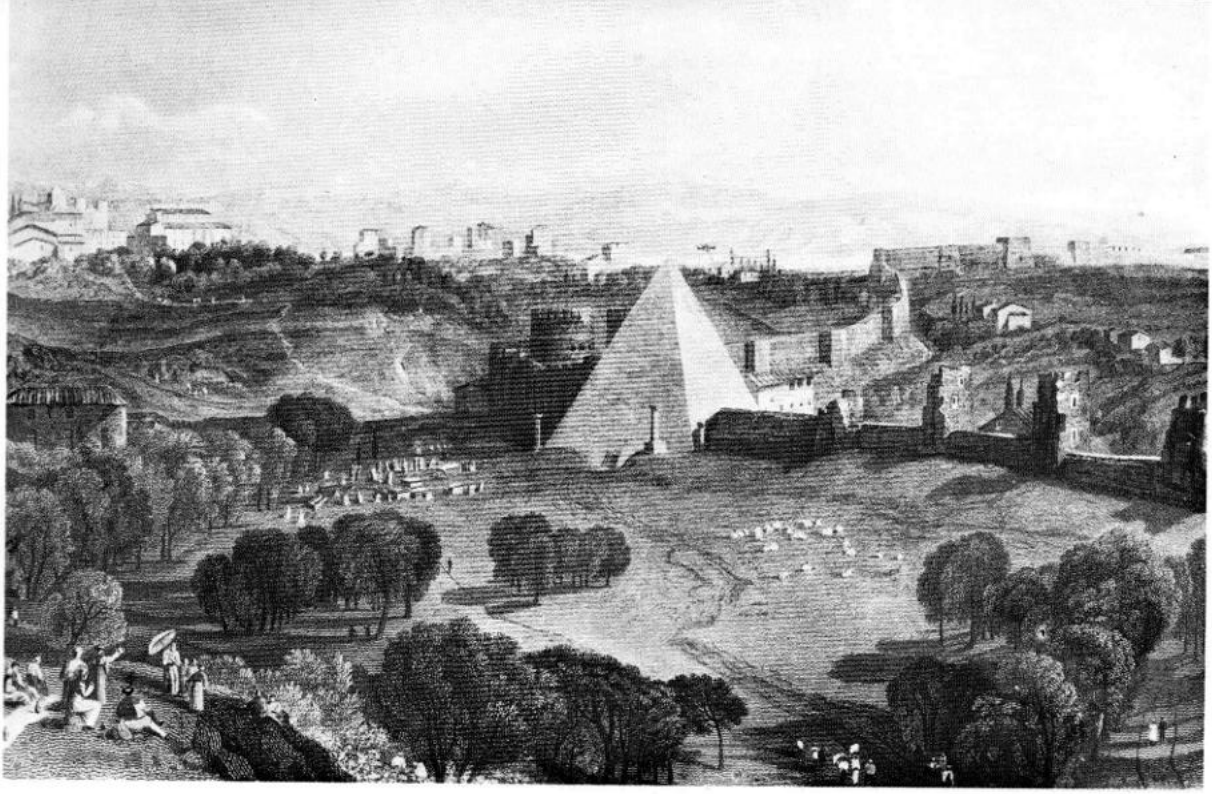
The so-called Cestius Pyramid, in whose shadow the Cemetery grew, was, according to an inscription, erected in 330 days in memory of Caius Cestius, probably a wellknown praetor and tribune during the latter half of the first century B.C. His title "epulo" indicates that he was a member of the High Priest Collegium, Septemviri epulonum, who served holy meals in honour of the Gods; his achievements hardly belong to history and only the Pyramid has preserved his name for posterity. The Pyramid was later included in the Aurelian town wall.

It is not known how and where non-Catholics were buried before permission was given by the authorities to use the ground near the Cestius Pyramid. It is likely that they were sometimes buried at the foot of the old town wall, the "Muro Torto", below the Pincian Hill near the Piazza Flaminia, beside the Roman prostitutes, who carried on their activities nearby and who were not allowed to be buried in consecrated earth. Probably non-Catholics were also laid to rest in hidden places within the town or out in the Campagna. Some were transported to the Protestant cemetery in Leghorn.

In the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century the area where the Cemetery now lies and its surroundings from Porta San Paolo to Monte Testaccio were still part of the Campagna and considered as the Roman People's Meadows, "Prati del Popolo Romano." The City of Rome had its wine-cellars at the Monte Testaccio and there were small

The Cestius Pyramid and the old town wall with Porta San Paolo. Litography by G. Engelmann.



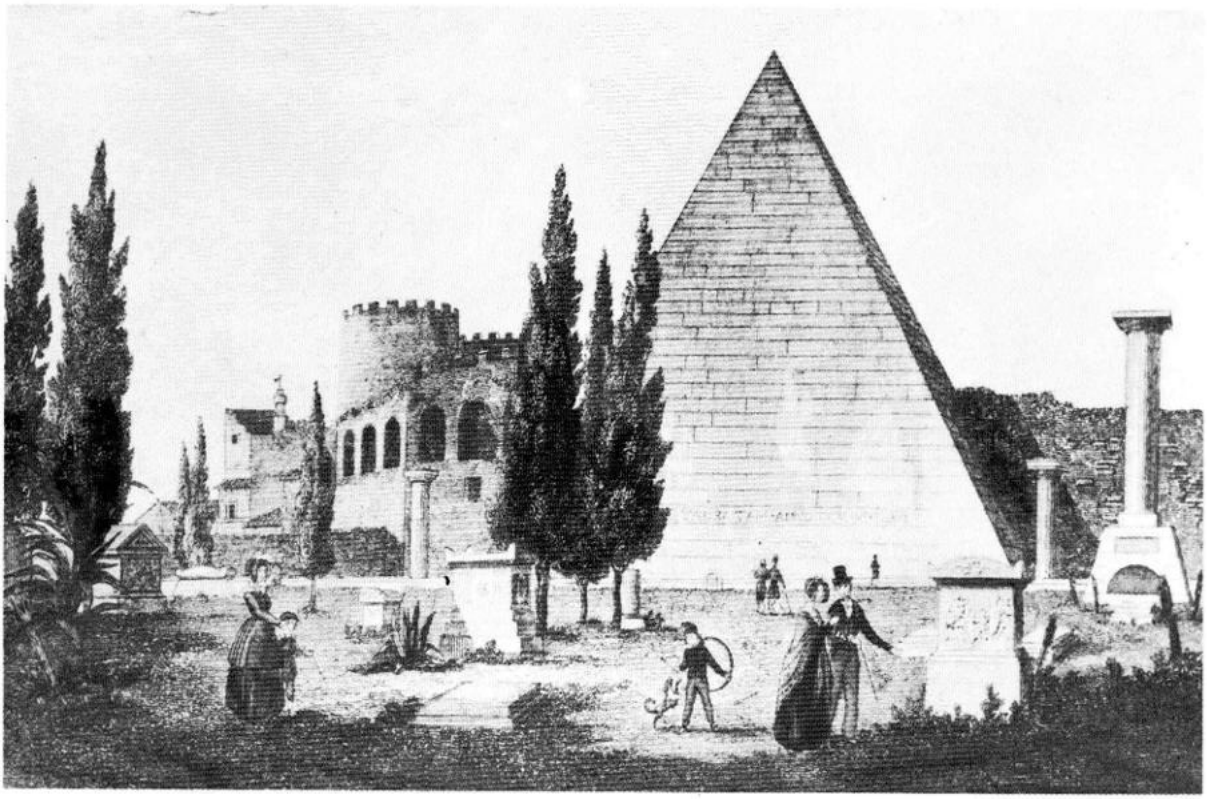


"The Roman People's Meadows" inside the old town wall. An idyllic bird's-eye perspective of the Cemetery with a number of sepulchral monuments to the left of the Cestius Pyramid. Engraving by an unknown artist 1819.

restaurants in the grottos where there was much gaiety. Rustic entertainments in not too serious style were given here and the neighbourhood does not seem to have enjoyed the best of reputations.

The first person who is now known to have been laid to rest in the Cemetery was an Oxford graduate named Langton, who was buried in 1738 at the age of 25. During excavations which took place at the Pyramid in 1928 his remains were discovered a few yards from the foot of the Pyramid, covered by a leaden shield bearing a text which is reproduced on the tombstone which was erected on his actual grave. Before Langton's remains were encountered, a student named Werpup from Hannover was believed to be the first to have been buried here. Werpup died in 1765 at the age of 25 years as a result of falling from his carriage in the Via Flaminia outside the town. This is said to have given rise to the legend of a young nobleman who, during a conversation with the Pope, expressed his enthusiasm for Rome and said that he would be happy if, after his death, he could be allowed to rest in the shadow of the Cestius Pyramid. Some days later, the story goes, he died through an accident and his wish was granted: he is thus supposed to be responsible for the origin of the Cemetery. It is doubtful that there is any foundation to this legend.

In 1803, by night, the young son of the Prussian Minister in Rome von Humboldt was interred. His father afterwards obtained from the municipal authorities the right of possession of a small lot (of about 14 meters' diameter) for himself and his family. He erected two monuments in the shape of short marble columns in memory of his son and of a younger son. This area seems to have been at one time specially marked off, but nowadays it is part of the



The oldest part of the Cemetery. Engraving by A. Moschetti from the middle of the nineteenth century.

whole Cemetery without any noticeable dividing line. The columns still remain.

A plan of the city, dated 1748 and signed by Nolli, seems to be the first official document showing the existence of the Cemetery, which is labelled thereon, "The protestants' burial place."

According to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church no person not belonging to the Faith in the Papal State of that time could be buried in a Catholic church or in consecrated earth. Nor were the non-Catholics allowed to inter their dead by daylight; burial had to be carried out during the night. It is not known how these regulations arose. Probably they had a double purpose, partly not to provoke animosity in the minds of the population which at that time was ignorant, easily roused and fanatic in its religious views, partly to protect the funeral guests from the possibility of being pestered by the people.

Exceptions to the rule of holding funerals by night were sometimes granted if an application was made by a mourner pleading ill-health or advanced age or blessed with high social standing. In 1821, for example, the elderly Sir Walter Synnod was granted such an exception and permitted to hold his daughter's funeral by daylight, although on this occasion a platoon of mounted police was ordered to follow the mourners "in case they should be insulted." But eight months later, when Sir Walter was himself brought to the same grave, the funeral took place by torch-light.

Also on other occasions soldiers were ordered, apparently as a standard practice,

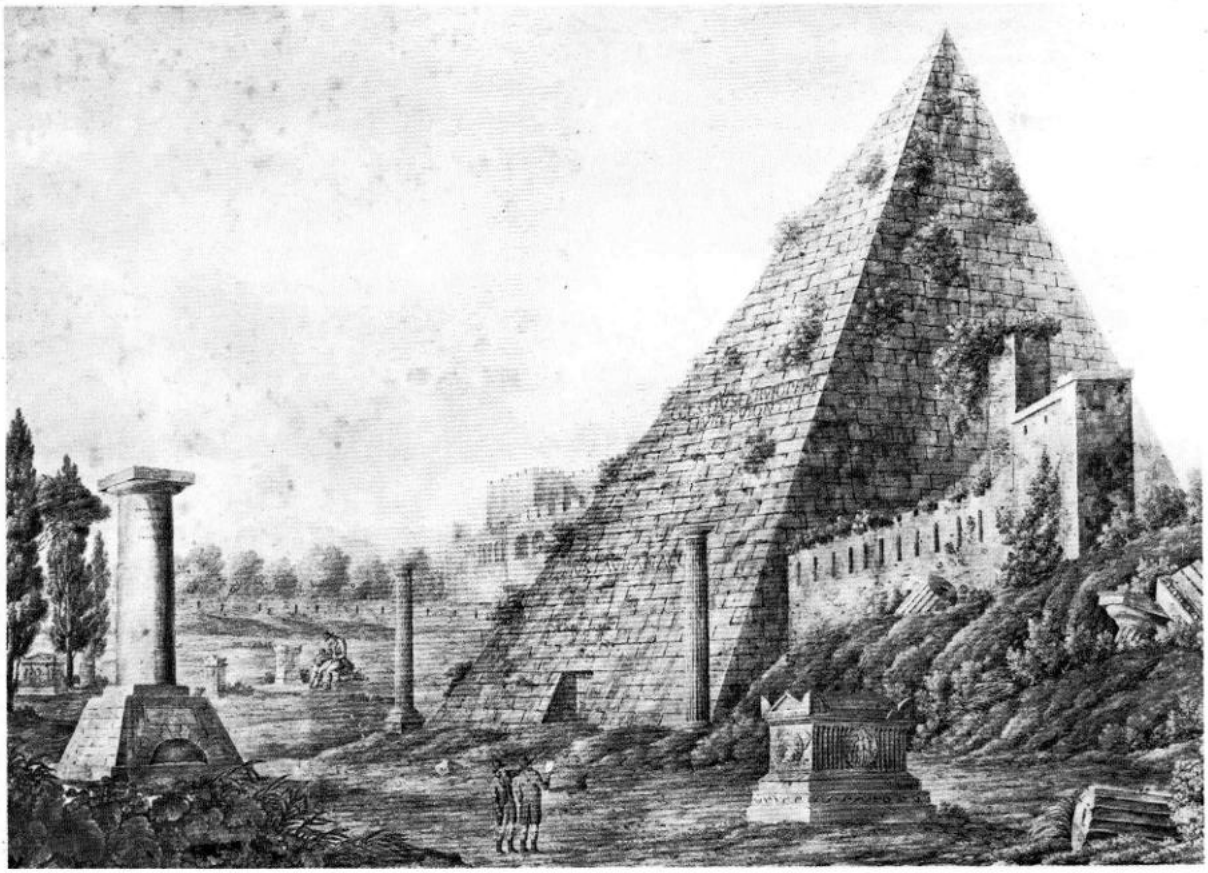
to protect the mourners from aggression, and this precaution appears to have been often necessary. As late as 1854 the German Envoy, after the burial of his wife, had to rescue the officiating clergyman from the fury of the people by taking him into his carriage. When one reads of these events one must not forget that religious tolerance at that time among people of all beliefs left much to be desired.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the only trees on the actual burial ground seem to have been a few ilexes. No wall or fence separated the area from the surrounding Campagna, where sheep grazed. The pines and cypresses which we see there to-day were planted at a much later date, where earlier there had been only wild flowers.

During the winter of 1821 Keats, in his flat in 26 Piazza di Spagna — now the Keats-Shelley Museum — realized that his life was drawing to a close, and asked his friend Severn to go and look at the place where he would be interred. When Severn returned and told him that white and blue violets, daisies and anemones grew wild on the graves, Keats rejoiced and said that he "already felt the flowers growing over him." (*)

(*) See Appendix on the back of the map.

At the foot of the Cestius Pyramid. Water-colour by an unknown, probably German, artist about 1800. Museo di Roma.



At the beginning of the nineteenth century there still was no barrier between the burial place and its surroundings. English memoirs of that time describe how sometimes fanatics and drunks damaged the mausoleums. As the gay amusements still continued in the area between the burial place and Monte Testaccio, it was clear that the Cemetery would have to be protected. In 1817 diplomatic representatives from Prussia, Hannover, and Russia made a joint appeal to the Papal Permanent Secretary, Cardinal Consalvi, asking permission to fence in the ground, which still lay completely open. The Cardinal complied to some extent with the appeal only in 1821 when a Danish Prince lent it his support, and the conditions laid down by the Cardinal were strongly criticized in the British Parliament the following year.

It is true that Consalvi refused to have the area containing the existing graves fenced in, on the ground that this would obstruct the access to and spoil the view of the Pyramid. On the other hand he made available an almost adjoining part of "The Roman People's Meadows", which was fenced in at the expense of the Holy See. This area is now called "zona vecchia", whereas the original ground is called "parte antica."

Cardinal Consalvi also showed little goodwill in other respects, and in 1821 he ordered six cypresses, which had been planted around a grave, to be cut down on the ground that they interfered with the view of the Pyramid. It is true that he finally gave permission for the cypresses to remain, but he forbade, at the same time, all future planting of trees within the "parte antica." No such prohibition was laid upon the remaining part of the Cemetery.

In 1824 Pope Leo XII gave his permission for the oldest part of the Cemetery to be surrounded by a moat, much of which still exists, though little by little it is being filled in. During half a century this was the only protection of the area. The wall that now surrounds the "parte antica" is believed to have been erected in the eighteen-seventies. When the moat was being dug a Roman road was discovered, probably the Via Ostiensis, of which a small part still can be seen in the low area between the Pyramid and the "parte antica", which is not under the administration of the Cemetery and which in time will be uncovered. It is possible to enter the Pyramid through the entrance made during its restoration in 1663. At that time two columns were found which have now been placed at two of the Pyramid's corners. Two marble tablets with inscriptions, discovered at the same time, are now kept in the Museum on the Capitoline Hill.

On the 16th August 1894, the German Embassy acting on behalf of the "Testaccio" non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome and also in the name of the foreign non-Catholic Communities, purchased about 4,300 sq. metres in addition to the already existing cemetery area. The entire cemetery area was divided into "zona prima", "zona seconda", and "zona terza". The last is nearest to the small chapel which can be seen from the main entrance immediately to the right at the end of the long cypress avenue. The chapel, erected in 1898, is simple but beautiful. It was decorated with stained glass windows, a gift from Germany, which unfortunately were destroyed during the second World War. There are also four antique altar candle-sticks, a gift from Sweden.

Over the main entrance to the Cemetery will be seen a single word engraved in capital letters: "RESURRECTURIS' (sanctified to those who shall rise again).

Highest up by the town wall proper is a

"For those who shall rise again." The main entrance of the Cemetery.

RESVRRECTVRIS

The Cemetery from the back with part of the enclosed old town wall and the Cestius Pyramid to the left. – To the right: The Cestius Pyramid and Porta San Paolo. When the apostle Paul on his last wandering was passing through this gate, he can't have failed to look at the Pyramid, which was erected in the year 16 B.C.

community grave, a so-called "ossario." The names of those buried in it are inscribed on marble tablets in the wall.

At one time it was not allowed to place crosses on the graves, nor was it permitted to use the symbol of the Cross. Until 1870 all inscriptions indicating eternal bliss were strictly forbidden on non-Catholic tombstones, as the authorities believed that these might give the impression that there was a possibility for adults dying outside the Faith to gain eternal salvation. Until 1870, when the worldly power of Rome passed to other hands, every proposed inscription had to be examined by a papal commision. In 1869 the commission rejected a suggestion to engrave "Hier ruht in Gott" on a tombstone on the grounds that "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" (outside the Church no salvation). Expressions like "God is love" were likewise forbidden. Since 1870 there has been no censorship of this nature.

The moat which surrounded the "parte antica" was unfortunately not always kept in good order, and here for instance dead cats and dogs were dropped, thus earning for the place the popular name "the dogs' grave" ("fosse dei cani"), but a small wall was erected with a door to permit communication with the surroundings.

Behind the wall bearing the Keats' memorial next to his grave, there is still the narrow door through which the dead were carried. One could not imagine a more modest entrance.

In 1882 the maintenance of the Cemetery was placed in the hands of Trucchi, guardian of the Cestius Pyramid. Until 1916 he, his son and his grandson in succession kept this place in perfect order. Ever since, and up to 1962, Commendatore Marcello Piermattei O.B.E. was in charge as Director of the Cemetery and in this capacity he showed an unusual interest and performed praiseworthy work. He deserves warmest thanks for his intelligent and energetic contribution to the maintenance and improvement of the Cemetery.

From 1963 to 1991 signor Remo E. MORBIDELLI was responsible for the direction of the Cemetery. He continued the work of his predecessors with praiseworthy dedication.

Since 1992 to 2002 signor Gianfranco MARCANTONI has been entrusted with the management of the Cemetery.

After August 1822 no more burials were to take place in the original area, the "parte antica". The new area was used for this purpose beginning in November of that year. However, a few, perhaps about ten persons, have since been interred in the "parte antica". According to the regulations issued by the general committee of the Cemetery, only particularly prominent persons are now allowed to be buried there. The decision is taken in each individual case by the Chairman of the General Committee, the Administrator and the Envoy from the deceased person's country.

The profound peace prevailing the Cemetery has now and then been disturbed by external events. During the battle of Rome in 1849 part of the wall was demolished for military reasons, and some of the tombstones and trees were damaged by gunfire. In 1857 a cannon-ball damaged the wall during artillery practice. The Prussian Minister protested strongly, drawing from the Papal Permanent Secretary a written reply which suggested that the cannon-ball deviated "perhaps on account of a gust of wind" ("forse per un colpo di vento"). Ten years later Garibaldi's partisans forced their way through to Porta San Paolo, but this time the Cemetery remained undamaged. During the second World War some bombs fell in various parts and destroyed or damaged some of the tombstones.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the affairs of the Cemetery seem to have been handled by the Prussian Minister to the Holy See. He was assisted by a committee consisting chiefly of Germans, Englishmen, and Americans, but little by little the committee apparently became entirely German. From 1871 until the first World War the German Ambassador to the Italian Government administered the Cemetery de facto. Soon after the end of the war, on February 15, 1921, the present General Committee was formed, consisting of the Ambassador or the Minister for every country concerned, under the chairmanship of the senior Ambassador. This General Committee meets once a year and elects yearly an Administrator, who handles most of the matters concerning the Cemetery. During the period between the two World Wars the German Ambassador was regularly elected Administrator. When the General Committee resumed activity in 1948 after World War II, the British Ambassador was elected Administrator, and thereafter, in 1951, the Swedish Minister. The Administrator has to assist him a small suncommittee consisting of representatives from some countries, at present (1955) from England, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. Except during the period of World War II no political or other discords have occurred during the discussions held by the General as well as by the Subcommittee. Cooperation has always been whole-hearted and exemplary.

In 1918 burials in the earth were prohibited, and all designs for monuments must have the approval of the Administration; some of major importance must nowadays be approved by three

From the oldest part of the Cemetery. Here we find indescribable peace and timeless calm.

experts: the directors of the American, British and German Academies in Rome. If this rule had come into force earlier, the erection of certain monuments lacking in taste — fortunately enough only a few — could have been prevented.

Unfortunately it is often very difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to obtain further details about people buried here. The book which has been placed at the main entrance of the Cemetery, shows the name of the deceased as well as the place of the grave, but contains no information as to the person's nationality or profession. Signor Piermattei has, however, kept a register containing these and other details since he took charge in 1916. Certain information concerning persons interred after 1871 can also be obtained from the authorities of the City of Rome. The Administration's own archives for the time before the second World War disappeared completely during the hostilities. It has not been possible to trace them.

The land on which the Cemetery is located belongs to the Administration of the

This Grave
contains all that was Mortal,
of a
YOUNG ENGLISH POET,
Who,
on his Death Bed,
in the Bitterness of his Heart
at the Malicious Power of his Enemies,
Desired
these Words to be engraven on his Tomb Stone
"Here lies One
Whose Name was writ in Water
Feb 24th 1821
To the Memory of
JOSEPH SEVERN
JOHN KEATS
Died 3 Aug 1879 aged 85.

"Testaccio" non-Catholic Cemetery or Protestant Cemetery at the Testaccio, Rome, the deed of purchase being dated the 16th August 1894. From time to time the building of a road through this area has been suggested but, fortunately, these plans have been prevented either by German or British, and during the last World War, by Swiss and Swedish diplomatic appeals. The town authorities have given benevolent consideration to this matter.

For some time past there have been national collective graves in the Cemetery; there are German, Greek and Swedish national tombs, besides two collective Tombs of the Russian Orthodox Church of Via Palestro 71, Rome. These two tombs and the national tombs are intended for the poor or as a last resting place for those whose individual graves are not permanent.

Several hundred well-known artists and writers of all kinds and nationalities lie at rest in the Cemetery, the most famous being Keats and Shelley. Most Englishmen who visit Rome go on a pilgrimage to these graves, which are carefully looked after by the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association. Their short lives and tragic deaths seem to fascinate one as much as their wonderful works.

Keats came to Rome in September 1820 suffering seriously from tuberculosis and died only four months later at the age of 26. The fact that he was a disillusioned man when he died is evident from the tombstone, which carries neither name nor year. However, his name appears on the gravestone erected over his friend Severn, who sleeps at his side and who is described as "Devoted friend and death-bed companion of John Keats."

Over Shelley's grave, close to the old town wall, is a plain tombstone, on which appear the poet's name together with the words "Cor cordium" (heart of all hearts) and three lines from the song of "Ariel" in Shakespeare's "The Tempest":

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

Shelley himself magnificently praised tempests in his verse, and a heavy storm caused his death. He drowned during a sailing trip outside Viareggio, at the age of only thirty. His body was cremated on the beach, in the presence of Byron, by his friend Trelawney, who now rests at his side. Shelley's heart was taken to England by his friend and is now in Boscombe (*).

The German poet Waiblinger from Heilbronn is buried here ("wer hasst, ist zu bedauern, und mehr noch fast wer liebt") as well as the Swedish poet Harald Jacobson, who worshipped Italy; no name is engraved on the iron plate over his grave, only the words in Swedish: "Never misuse the name of Christ." The reason for this inscription is not known. There are also the graves of the German author Malvida von Meysenbug ("Memoiren einer Idealistin"), the Danish authors Carsten Hauch and Börge Janssen as well as the great Norwegian historian P.A. Munch.

Among the painters buried in the Cemetery are Carstens from Schleswig, the Danish animal-painter Holm, Keats' friend Severn, the Germans Fohr, von Marees, Reinhold, Riedel, and Reinhardt, the latter also famous for his engravings of Italian landscapes.

There are many sculptors: the Englishmen Gibson and Wyatt, the Scot MacDonald, the American Story, who sleeps

(*) See pages 34 and 35

To the left: The tombstones of John Keats and his friend Joseph Severn. Keats' name is to be found on Severn's stone. The small white tombstone between the two above-mentioned is sacred to the memory of Johan David Akerblad, the famous Swedish egyptologist.

under his wellknown sculpture "The Angel of Grief", of which a copy was placed on the campus of Leland Stanford University in California in memory of the victims of the earthquake of 1906, the Dutchman Pander, in whose honour a museum was opened in the Dutch town of Leeuwarden, and the Finn Takanen, as well as the Swedes Byström, Lundberg, and Ruth Milles.

The architects Mead from the United States and the German Semper are also buried here.

Among the more famous people of general interest resting here are to be mentioned Goethe's son August, whose gravestone is decorated with a portrait medallion by Thorvaldsen; Gramsci, perhaps the foremost name in Italian Communism and the Russian Prince Jussupoff, father of Rasputin's slayer.

The great Goethe himself visited the Cemetery during his stay in Rome in 1786 and apparently toyed with the idea of being buried there, to judge from the following lines:

O, wie fühl ich in Rom mich so froh...
Dulde mich, Jupiter, hier und Hermes führe mich später
Cestius Mal vorbei, leise zum Orkus hinab.

The name of an English girl, Rosa Bathurst, still survives in Rome on account of her striking beauty, tragic death and the mystery of her father's fate. A girl of sixteen, she drowned in the Tiber in 1824 during a ride with friends. Her father, a young English diplomat, disappeared on a secret mission to Vienna. Nothing has ever been known of his fate, which has given rise to many suppositions and attempted explanations.

Is there any cemetery in the world that inspires such a feeling of timeless peace, hope and certainty of belief as this one? Here is no fear of death, no anxiety, no decay, no difference between rich and poor, no cleavage of language or religion — only a feeling of unspeakable peace, something of the peace that passeth all understanding. The noise from the tumultuous traffic of the metropolis does not reach here; the only thing interrupting the silence is the singing of birds, which is stronger here than in any other place. Representatives of every race and tongue, from all parts of the world, of every birth and age, rest here side by side. Inscriptions in all the languages of the world give evidence thereof.

Many sleep here after a completed life-work, more have died while still young. One thing all have in common who rest in the shadow of the Cestius Pyramid and the town wall, under cypress and pines, surrounded by myrtle- and laurel-trees, wild rose-bushes and fiery red camellias: they have all had the great privilege of living for a short or for a long time in The Eternal City.

To the right: "Here lie Swedes". The Swedish national grave is covered by a stone slab on which are carved the names and the year of birth and death of the Swedes interred here.

The Cemetery Chapel. Drawing by Carlo Dottarelli.

To the left: Part of the old Roman road, Via Ostiensis, which was discovered when the moat was dug in 1824. In 1928 further excavation was carried out here.

THE CEMETERY OF ARTISTS AND POETS

PORTA SAN PAOLO

"It might make one in love with death, to be buried in so sweet a place."

SHELLEY

CAMELLIAS glisten in sombre splendour amidst the laurel and honeysuckle, the myrtle is in bloom, and fair roses twine garlands round the stems of cypress trees. Narcissi and lilies rise from the high grass, and overhead the thrush sings the summer evening's shimmering farewell to the dying day.

Fair garden, whither the wanderer wends his way, are they the poppies of oblivion that breathe among thy roses, is it the peace of dreamland that rustles through thy darkening cypresses?

But seest thou not the white crosses among the leaves and flowers, seest thou not the broken columns half-hidden by the ivy? Bend asunder the branches, that have woven the resignation of years over the sorrowful lines written upon the stone, look down among the lilies and violets, and behold! They flower upon graves!

The soil thou treadst upon is holy; here lives the memory of those who once were men.

From far came they hither these silent sleepers, wide around the world had their winged thoughts flown ere they gathered here into eternal rest.

Many lands had reared them, many paths led them on through life, by sunlit heights or through the shadow of the valleys, in the triumph of happiness, or bent under the burden of grief — until at last they reached their goal, the night-covered plain into which heights and valleys have merged, where the jubilant voices of victory resound no more, and where the wail of sorrow is hushed.

Side by side have they lain down here to sleep. The laurel over their head crowns alike the urn strewn by the immortelles of Fame, and the humble mound where the grass grows wild. From darkening cypresses slowly descends the night of oblivion alike upon the name which history has hewn in the marble, as upon the nameless whose doings are long forgotten. Maybe there lingers still the light of a yearning memory round the simple wooden cross long after the stately mausoleum lies wrapped in darkness, maybe among the field flowers and grasses of the mound love watches through the still night in the breath of the violets long after the fragrant roses have fallen asleep.

The inscriptions tell who they were that death brought here, and, pensive, the wanderer reads their names. He reads the year a name was given them; he reads the year it was taken from them: but what of joy and what of sorrow lies between these years he knows not.

They were artists many of those who lie beneath the crosses.

Full of enthusiasm and young joy they journeyed hither, hailing the Eternal City as their mother. And Rome took them to her arms, reared their souls with her strong thoughts, and told them among the ruins of the Flavian amphitheatre and the imperial

To the left: The tomb of Lady Temple, née Elisa Watson, wife of Sir Grenville Temple and renowned for her beauty. The monument with its beautiful and pathetic relief was made in 1810 by the Swedish sculptor Erik Gustaf Göthe.

palaces on the Palatine hill, her own proud story and the marble-shining legend of Hellas.

Here they dreamt their fairest dream. Here they were consecrated Soldiers of the Light at the altar of the eternal Ideal, here in this same Rome, where Michael Angelo raised his mighty cupola over the temple ground of antique art, and Raphael awoke the butterfly-winged Eros of beauty from the long slumber of mediaeval night to the spring morning of the Renaissance.

And thus when they fancied they were nearing their goal, and they already stretched out their hands towards the flying Daphne of their ideal, then the slender limbs grew into a sombre cypress where a heart beat no more beneath the bark; and not to the jubilant Capitol of fame, but to the silent Campo Santo of oblivion, Death led the way.

Young came they hither. Their sun had barely reached the height of mid-day when darkness overtook them, their thoughts had scarcely blossomed into spring ere Death wrapped its wintry shroud around them. Yet grieve not over your fate ye dead who died so young! For morning is the grace of the day, and life's sweetest roses crown the locks of spring. But evening bears the mark of sorrow upon its darkening brow, and autumn is the time of farewell when the swallows of joy depart.

Ye sleep in the royal sepulchre of a bygone world, in the Pantheon of the human soul, the crumbling city walls of old Rome protect your shelter, and beyond, the Campagna spreads its vast silence around your dreams. Ye sleep in pagan earth, a breath from the Elysian fields rustles through the cypresses which guard your graves, and the imperishable beauty of Hellas and Rome veils the sombre majesty of death.

Death is not the skeleton, who, menacing, wanders from home to home in the twilight of paganism, who in the mediaeval night dances his grim Dance of Death round the revels of the festal hall and in the frescoes of the cloister walls, and, scythe in hand, keeps watch by the tombs of the Renaissance. Death is a graceful boy with flower-crowned locks and dream-heavy forehead, beautiful as the Genius of Love. Gently he extinguishes the light of life in the smouldering torch he treads underfoot.

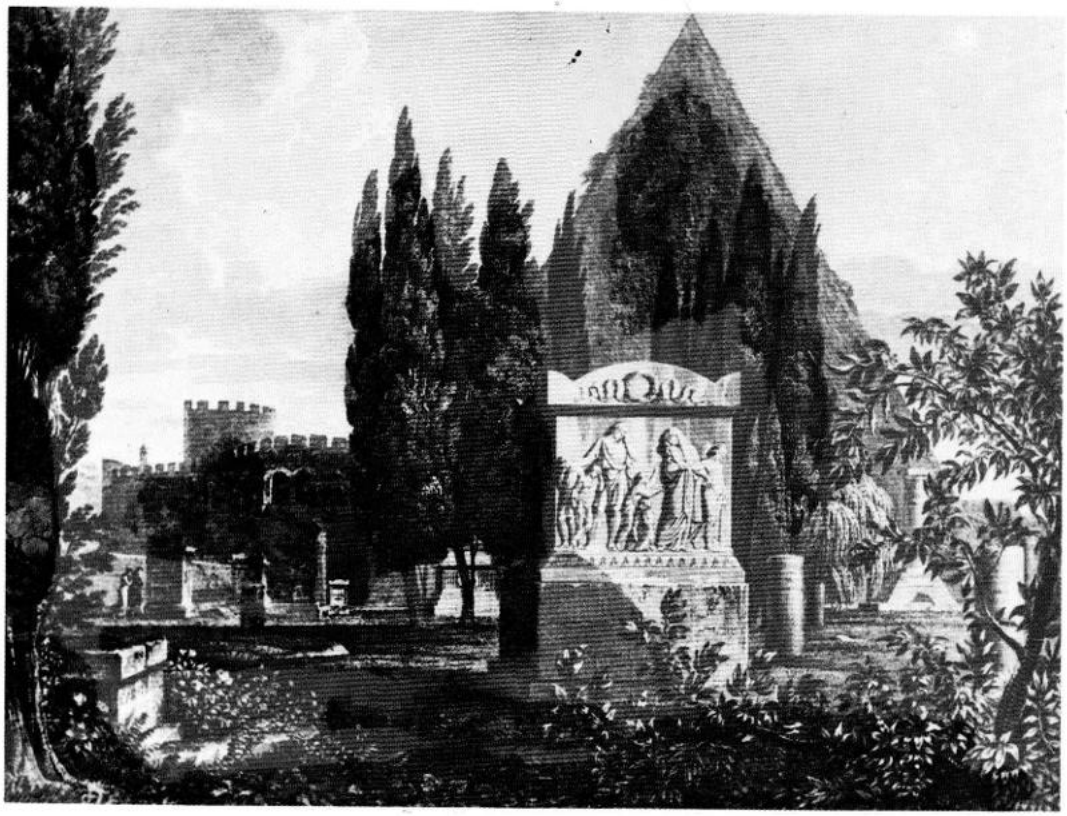
The grave is not the dark abode of corruption, polluted by the decay of the body. The grave is the urn wherein the memory of a human soul is laid.

And the wanderer loves to linger amongst the graves at Porta San Paolo. The stranger amidst the restless throng of the day seeks refuge with ye, silent strangers, who for good and all have stayed behind in old Rome. From far come friendly thoughts to your sweet Campo Santo, where forgetfulness and peace live among cypresses and roses.

The twilight of dreams falls over Rome, and the afterglow of antiquity lights up the solemn ruins. Like the bas-relief of an old sarcophagus, the summer of Italy enshrines the strangers' rest.

Axel Munthe

From "Memories and Vagaries" by Axel Munthe (the famous author of "The Story of San Michele"), London, John Murray, Albemarle Street, W.



The old part of the Cemetery with Porta San Paolo and the Cestius Pyramid in the background and in the foreground Göthe's monument to the memory of Lady Temple. To the left Carstens' tombstone and to the right the two short marble columns which mark the resting-place of the young sons of the Prussian Minister von Humboldt. Engraving by W.F. Gmelin.

"The most beautiful and solemn I have ever beheld."

Shelley

..."the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.
And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death.
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath."

Shelley

"Fit for the poet the place, either in life or in death. All is eternal around, none belongeth to nation now living: Unto the world it belongs, unto the genius of man."

Eugene Lee Hamilton

"May Mercury lead me hereafter,
Past the Cestian monument, gently
Down to Hades."

Goethe

"The most beautiful thing in Italy, almost, seemed to me in May and June last, the exquisite summery luxuriance and perfect tendance of that spot. I mean, of course, that very particular spot below the great grey wall, the cypresses and the time silvered Pyramid. It is tremendously, inexhaustibly touching — its effect never fails to overwhelm."

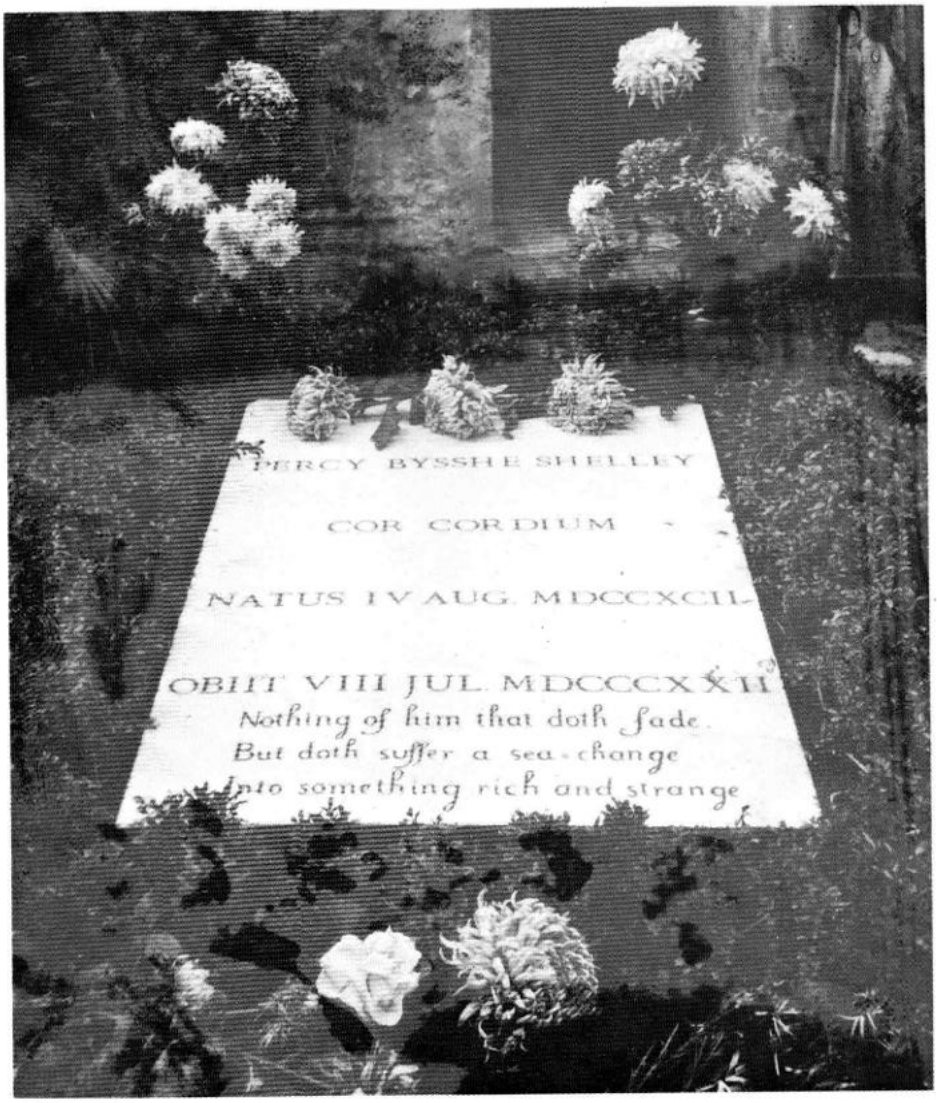
Henry James to Clare Benedict

..."It is of great comfort to me to know that those who rest in the shade of the cypresses and the Aurelian Walls in the tender bosom of the earth of the 'great Mother Rome' are not considered 'Strangers' but 'Romans'."

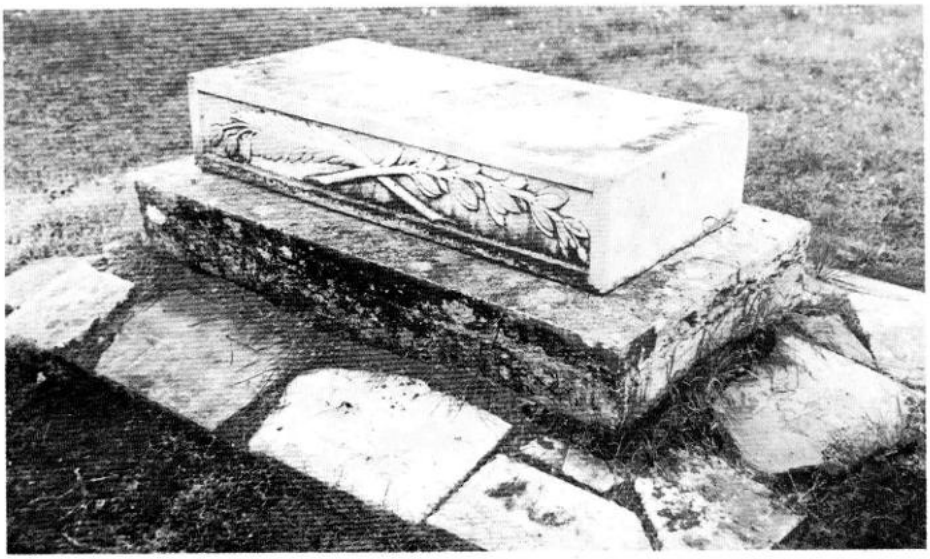
Mrs. Jesse B. Carter

This monument with its beautiful relief representing a winged genius was erected to the memory of the Finnish art-patron Victor Hoving, dead in 1876. His compatriot Walter Runeberg made the monument.

Shelley's tombstone with the words "Cor cordium", (heart of all hearts) the date of his birth and death, and three lines from the song of "Ariel" in Shakespeare's "The Tempest."

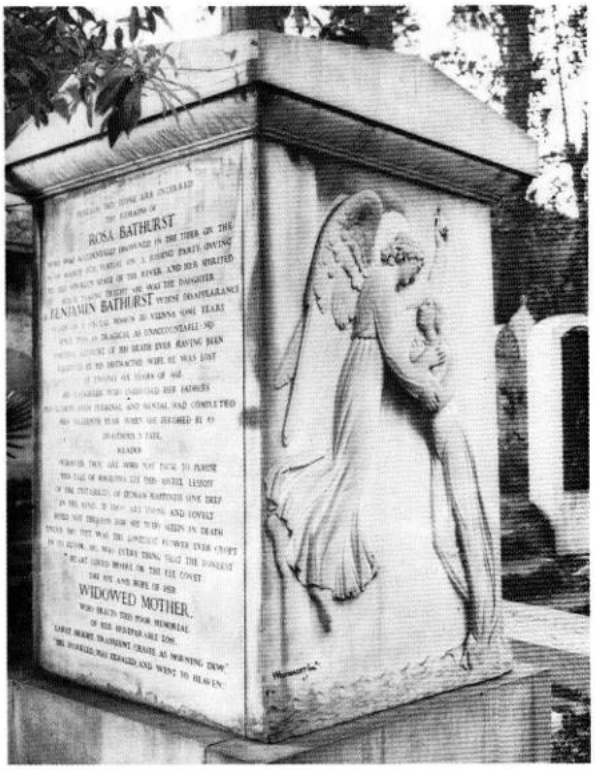


The simple, beautiful tombstone of a young Englishman, William Harding of Scarboro, who died in 1821, at the age of 31, during a journey in Italy.



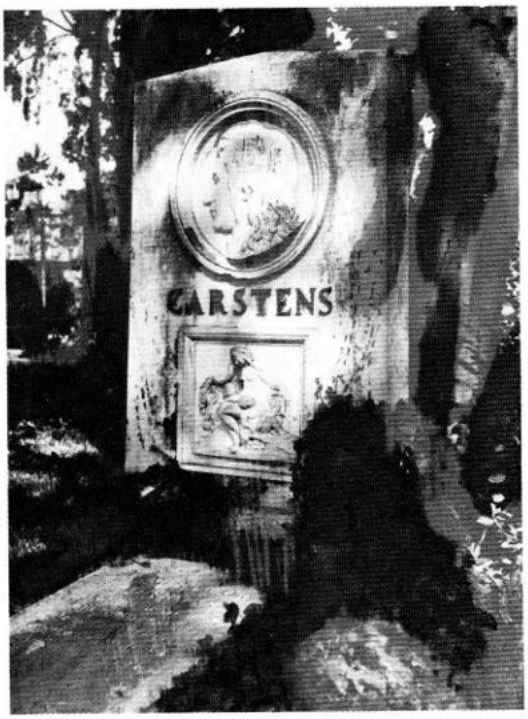
An inscription on a tombstone from 1830

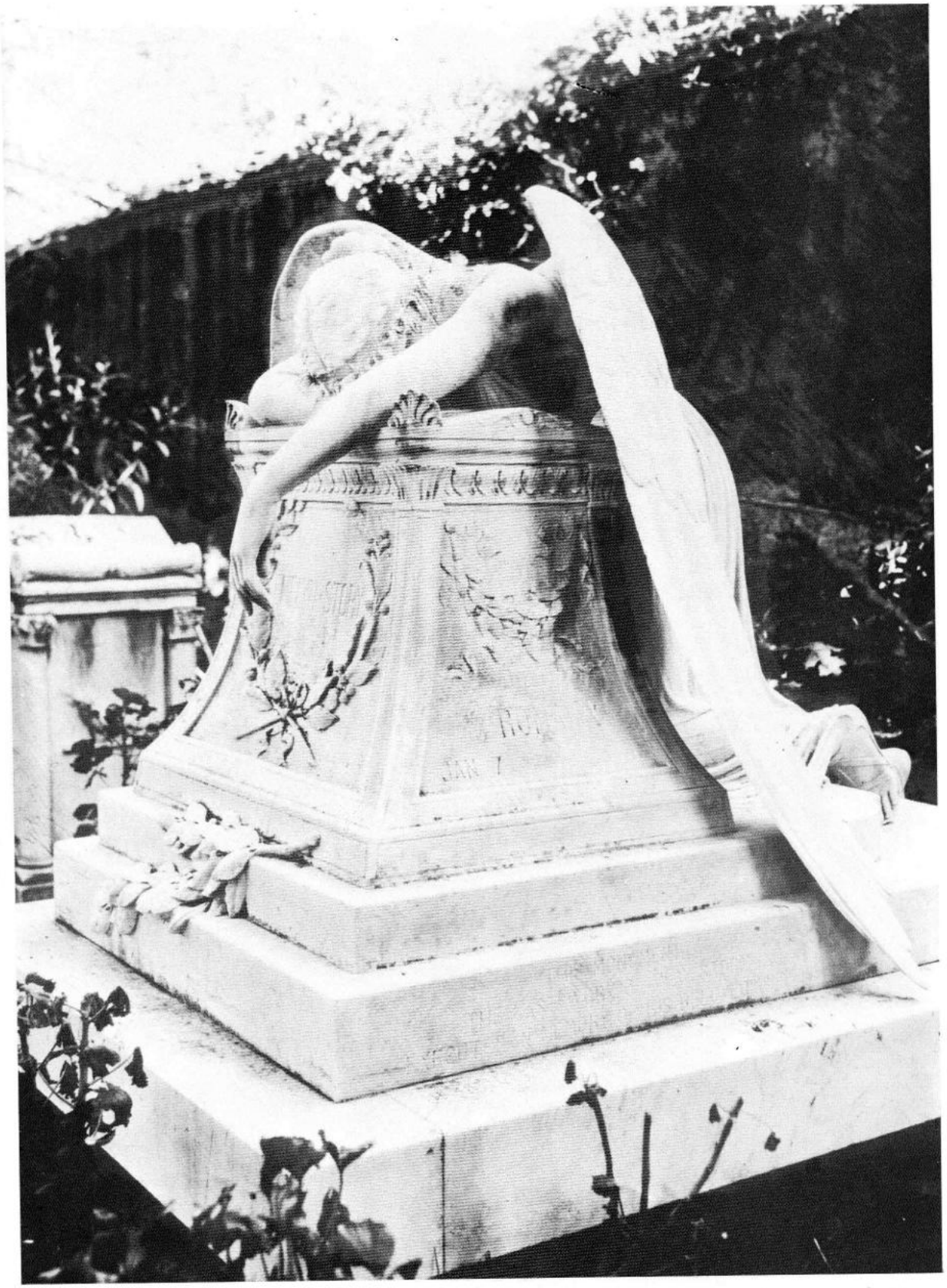
HERE LIE THE MORTAL REMAINS
OF THE REV.D ROBERT FINCH M.A. OF BALLIOL COLLEGE OXFORD
DESCENDED FROM THE ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE HOUSE
OF THE EARLS OF WINCHELSEA AND AYLESFORD
HE WAS BORN IN THE CITY OF LONDON DEC XXVII A.D. MDCCLXXXIII
AND GAVE SUCH EARLY PROOFS OF HIGH ABILITIES AND WORTH
AS GAINED HIM THE CONFIDENCE OF PITT
AND THE FRIENDSHIP OF PERCEVAL
UNDER SUCH AUSPICES HE MIGHT HAVE RISEN TO POSTS OF HONOUR
BUT SACRIFICING VIEWS OF AMBITION TO THE LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE
HE TRAVELLED A CONTEMPLATIVE AND DEEP OBSERVER
THROUGH MANY KINGDOMS OF EUROPE AND ASIA
EVERY WHERE SEEKING THE GOOD AND THE LEARNED
EVERY WHERE SOUGHT FOR AND HONOURED BY THEM
IN MDCCCXX HE MARRIED MARIA ELDEST DAUGHTER
OF FREDERICK THOMPSON ESQR. OF KENSINGTON
AND THEN FIXING HIS RESIDENCE AT ROME
DEVOTED HIMSELF TO THE CALM PLEASURES OF A STUDIOUS
AND THE SACRED DUTIES OF A DOMESTIC LIFE
BENEVOLENT GENEROUS AFFECTIONATE SINCERE
NO POOR MAN EVER SOLICITED HIS CHARITY IN VAIN
NO SCHOLAR SOUGHT THAT HE DID NOT DERIVE
NO ARTIST NEEDED THAT HE DID NOT RECEIVE
INSTRUCTION FROM HIS LEARNING
FROM HIS LIBERALITY ASSISTANCE
THUS DEAR TO SOCIETY DEAR TO HIS FRIENDS
DEAR AH! HOW DEAR TO HIS DEVOTED WIFE
HE LIVED A BRIGHT EXAMPLE OF EXCELLENCE
UNTIL IT PLEASED ALMIGHTY GOD TO REMOVE HIM
TOO SOON ALAS! FOR THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS
FROM A STATE OF TRIAL TO A STATE OF REWARD
IN THE XLVII YEAR OF HIS AGE SEPT. XVI A.D. MDCCCXXX
TO THE MEMORY OF HER REVERED HER BELOVED HUSBAND
HIS WIDOW RAISES THIS SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT
WITH EARNEST SUPPLICATION AND PRAYER
THAT SHE MAY BE ENABLED TO ENDURE THE BITTER GRIEF
INFLICTED BY HIS UNTIMELY DEATH
WITH THE SAME PIETY FAITH AND RESIGNATION
WITH WHICH HE HAD PREPARED HIMSELF TO MEET IT



The monument of Rosa Bathurst, an English girl who died in Italy in 1824, at the age of 16. It was made by Richard Westmacott jr. — To the right: The tombstone of the German poet Wilhelm Waiblinger who died in Rome in 1830. — Below: Friedrich von Humboldt, who died in 1803 when he was only one year old, son of the Prussian Minister to the Holy See. — Below, to the right: Antonio Gramsci, who died in 1937, one of the founders of Italian Communism.

Peter Andreas Munch, (dead in 1863) famous Norwegian historian. — To the right: August von Goethe, (dead in 1830) only son of the great German poet. — The right hand page: Under the famous monument "Angel of Grief" its maker, the American sculptor and poet W.W. Story and his wife have been buried. A replica of the monument has been erected at Stanford University in California to the memory of the victims of the earth-quake in 1906. — Below: Asmus Jacob Carstens, (dead in 1798) painter from Schleswig. — Below, to the right: The Swede Johan David Akerblad, (dead in 1819) one of the pioneers of Egyptology.





Johan Niklas Byström, one of the great names in the Swedish history of art. He died in Rome in 1848. Villa Malta, the house in Rome where he lived for many years, was a famous meeting-place for Swedish artists and poets. — To the right: The Swedish painter Nils Jakob Olsson Blommér who died in 1853.

The Latin inscription on the tombstone of the Swedish diplomat Carl Bildt and his wife was written by his friend, Professor Johan Bergman. Bildt was an eminent writer, historian and connoisseur of Rome, where he spent 40 years of his life, and he ought of course to have been buried at a place of honour in the oldest part of the Cemetery. This is not the case, because he himself chose the spot where he now lies.

PAGE, Commodore, Explorer, Thomas Jefferson (1808–1899) of the United States Navy and the Confederate States Navy, grandson of Thomas Nelson Junior signer of the declaration of Independence of 1776. ETTORE XIMENES Sculptor

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
JEFFERSON PAGE
OF VIRGINIA
MAJOR OF ARTILLERY
BORN AUGUST 3, 183
DIED JUNE 16, 186
AND HIS SISTER
MARY BELLE PAGE
AGED 21
FLORENCE APRIL 20, 18
IT IS SOWN A NATURAL
BODY IT IS RAISED
A SPIRITUAL BODY
1. COR XV. 44.

KEATS' GRAVE

This Grave
contains all that was Mortal,
of a
YOUNG ENGLISH POET,
Who,
on his Death Bed,
in the Bitterness of his Heart
at the Malicious Power of his Enemies,
Desired
these Words to be engraven on his
Tomb Stone

"Here lies One
Whose Name was writ in Water."

Feb 24th 1821.

To that high Capital, where Kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.

(Shelley—"Adonais")

Keats' presence in Rome had passed unnoticed by most of the British residents and visitors and his funeral was attended by few people, several of whom had become interested in his tragic story only since his death. Severn, who had personally and constantly cared for his friend during his last days was, for some weeks after, ill and prostrated with grief but, as health returned, he found a peace of mind in hours of contemplation near Monte Testaccio. In the early summer of that year he wrote:

"Poor Keats has now his wish — his humble wish: he is at peace in the quiet grave. I walked there a few days ago, and found the daisies had grown all over it. It is in one of the most lovely retired spots in Rome. You cannot have such a place in England. I visit it with a delicious melancholy which relieves my sadness. When I recollect for how long Keats had never been one day free from ferment and torture of mind and body, and that now he lies at rest with the flowers he so desired above him, with no sound in the air but the tinkling bells of a few simple sheep and goats, I feel indeed grateful that he is here, and remember how earnestly I prayed that his sufferings might end, and that he might be removed from a world where no one grain of comfort remained for him."

Sixty-one years later Severn found his own rest in the same place and by the side of his friend.

SHELLEY'S FUNERAL

After Shelley's death in July 1822, Mary Shelley decided that his ashes should be placed beside their son William who had been buried in the "parte antica" of the Testaccio cemetery three years earlier. The ashes, in an oak casket, were accordingly sent to Freeborn, the British Consul in Rome, but by the time they arrived the papal authorities had already prohibited further burials in the "parte antica." The casket was therefore deposited in the Consul's wine cellar until other arrangements could be made in accordance with Mary's wishes.

Mary, at that time in Genoa and unable to go to Rome, was much distressed at the delay. Her friends, therefore, asked Severn to assist. On December 16, 1822, Leigh-Hunt wrote "You have nothing, dear Severn, but funeral tasks put upon you, but they are for extraordinary people and excellent friends." Trelawney also promised Mary that he would go to Rome in February 1823 to deal with the problem.

Freeborn and Severn, having tried without success to obtain special sanction for a burial in the "parte antica", decided to ask permission to exhume the body of William and rebury it with his father's ashes in the new enclosure. This permission was granted and the funeral was arranged for January 23, 1823. What happened then is best described in a letter written by Severn to a friend on the same day:

"I have just returned from the funeral of poor Shelley... Our plan was frustrated, after I had got a permission to disinter the bones of the child for, on opening the grave, we discovered a skeleton $5^{1}/_{2}$ feet. Yet it appeared to be under the Stone, so that some mistake must have been made in placing the Stone. To search further we dare not, for it was in the presence of many *respectful* but wondering Italians: nay, I thought it would have been a doubtful and horrible thing to disturb any more Stranger's Graves in a Foreign Land. So we proceeded very respectfully to deposit poor Shelley's ashes alone. There were present General Cockburn, Sir Charles Sykes, Messrs. Kirkup, Westmacott, Scoles, Freeborn, and the Revs. W. Cook and Burgess. These two gentlemen, with myself, wished it to be done solemnly and decently, so the box was enclosed in a coffin, and it was done altogether as by the hands of Friends."

A few weeks later Trelawney came to Rome. He did not like the position of Shelley's grave among a number of others and he purchased what seemed to him a better plot near the old wall No difficulties were made over the exhumation and the ashes were transferred to their present resting place, beneath the "Cor Cordium" gravestone.

William Shelley's tombstone may still be seen in the "parte antica." The true site of the child's grave must be somewhere close by.

A GENERAL MAP

of

THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY

with

an alphabetical list of a number of eminent
and famous persons interred there

ALPHABETICAL LIST

of certain persons buried in the non-catholic cemetery at Testaccio in Rome.
(The number in front of the name refers to the number of the grave on the plan)

NATIONAL and COMMON TOMBS:

33a Danish 38 Germany 124 Greece
23 Sweden 141 Orthodox Russian Church

3. Akerblad, Johan David (1763–1819), Swedish diplomat and egyptologist
46. Bart, Hans (1862–1928), German journalist
27. Bathurst, Rosa (–1824), of British nationality, drowned in the Tiber at the age of 16 years
2. Bell, John (1762–1820), famous Scottish surgeon and anatomist
19. Benedict, Clara Woolson (1844–1923), American humanist and "Benemerenti" of the cemetery
19. Benedict Clara (1870–1961), American humanist and "Benemerenti" of the Cemetery
99. Bennj, White Arturo (–1867), Polish follower of Garibaldi, died during the defense of Rome
135. de Bildt, Carl Nils Daniel (1850–1931), baron, Swedish Minister to Italy, writer, member of the Swedish Academy, and his wife
135. de Bildt, Hedvig Alexandra née Keiller (1864–1948), baroness
30. Blommér, Nils Jakob Olsson (1816–1853), Swedish painter
21. von Bush, Ludwig August (died 1845), Ministre Plénipotentiaire of Prussia
52. von Bülow, Otto (1827–1901), Ministre Plénipotentiaire of Prussia
35. Byström, Johan Niklas (1783–1848), Swedish sculptor
10. Carstens, Jacob Asmus (1754–1798), painter from Schleswig, founder of classicism
134. Carter, Jesse Benedict (1872–1917), American major, director of the American Academy in Rome. Died at the Italian front, first World War
144. Ceccarini, Giovanni (1823–1888), prominent Italian surgeon and humanist
24. Cippico, Antonio (1877–1935), Italian senator from Dalmatia
127. Coleman, Enrico (1846–1911), famous Italian painter
142. Connelly, Pierce Francis (1841–1932), American sculptor.
84. Corrodi, Arnold (1848–1874), Swiss painter
91. Corrodi, Herman (1844–1905), Swiss painter
83. Corrodi, Salomon (1810–1892), Swiss painter
114. Crowninshield, Frederic (1845–1918), painter, poet, director of the American Academy in Rome
120. Curtis, Charles Densmore (1876–1925), American architect and writer
19. Fenimore Woolson, Constance (1845–1894), American poet and writer, grandniece of the famous writer Fenimore Cooper
9. Fohr, Carl (1795–1818), one of the first German painters of the romantic period, drowned in the Tiber
57. Franchetti, Leopoldo (1847–1917), baron, Italian senator and humanist
50. Padre Gavazzi, Alessandro (1809–1889), chaplain in Garibaldi's army
61. Gibson, John (1790–1866), English sculptor, R.A., lived 48 years in Rome
53. von Goethe, August (1789–1830), the only son of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
145. Gramsci, Antonio (1891–1937), head of the Italian communist party.

143. Gurko, Ramenko Basili (1864–1937), Russian general

12a. Harding of Scarboro, William (–1821), English gentleman

81. Haseltine, William Stanley (1835–1900), American painter

86. Hauch, Carsten (1790–1872), Danish writer and poet, born in Norway

115. Hertz, Henrietta (1846–1913), German, founder of "Biblioteca Hertziana" at Via Gregoriana

67. Heyland, Alexander (1840–1914), American major and "Benemerenti" of the American Academy in Rome

42. Holm, Christian (–1846), Danish animal painter

89. Hoving, Carl Isak Victor (1846–1876), Finnish fine art patron; monument by the Finnish sculptor Walter Runeberg

11. von Humboldt, Wilhelm (1794–1803), and

11. von Humboldt, Friedrich Konstantin Gustaf (1806–1807), sons of the Prussian minister to the Holy See

140. Jacobson, Harald (1863–1913), Swedish writer and poet

77. Janssen, Börge (1867–1933), Danish writer

126. Jussupoff, Felice (1856–1928), Russian prince

117. Karabcensky, Nicola Platonović (1852–1925), well-known Russian lawyer

1. Keats, John (1795–1821), the famous English poet

33. Kestner, August (1777–1854), from Hannover, counsellor of legation, son of Lotte (in Goethe's "Die Leiden des jungen Werthers")

133. Krupensky, Anatole (died 1923), Russian ambassador to Italy

37. Labriola, Antonio (1843–1907), Italian professor of social science, deputy

5. Langton, George (1713–1738), student at Oxford University, last descendant of an historical noble family, the first known person who was buried in the cemetery

137. Lundberg, Johan Teodor (1852–1926), Swedish sculptor

69. MacDonald, Laurence (1799–1878), sculptor of the Royal Academy of Scotland and Royal Academy of S. Luca in Rome

100. von Marées, Hans (1837–1887), German painter

65. Marsch, George Perkins (1801–1882), Minister of U.S.A. to Italy 1881–1882

26. Martin, John L. (1800–1848), Chargé d'Affaires of U.S.A. in Rome

12. Mead, Wm Rutherford (1854–1928), architect, director of the American Academy in Rome

78. Melegari, Dora (1846–1924), Italian poet and philosopher

51. von Meysenbug, Malvida (1816–1903), German writer ("Memoiren einer Idealistin")

110. Miceli, Luigi (1824–1906), Italian patriot and friend of Garibaldi, Deputy and Minister of Justice

8. Milles, Ruth Anna Maria (1873–1941), Swedish sculptor

105. Munch, Peter Andreas (1810–1863), Norwegian historian

61a. Page, Commodore, Explorer, Thomas Jefferson (1808–1899) of the United States Navy and the Confederate States Navy, grandson of Thomas Nelson Junior signer of the declaration of Independence of 1776.

40. Palin, Nils Gustaf (1765–1842), Swedish diplomat and egyptologist

103. Pander, Pier (1864–1919), Dutch sculptor in whose honour a museum is established in the town of Leeuwarden, Holland

119. Peck, Tracy (1838–1921), professor in Latin and history at the American Academy in Rome

32. Perowne, Sir Victor (1897–1951), British Minister to the Holy See

16. Reinhart, Johann Christian (1761–1847), German painter and engraver, famous for his engravings of Italian landscapes

39. Reinhold, Heinrich (1791–1825), German landscape-painter

73. Riedel, August (1799–1883), German painter from Bayreuth

87. Rivoira, G. Teresio (1849–1919), famous Italian archeologist, excavated the Palatine

97. Rozat, Bartolomeo (1824–1849), Swiss from Geneva, captain of the bersaglieri, died during the defense of Rome

95. Scholey, John (died 1867), during the defense of Rome, English follower of Garibaldi

107. Semper, Gottfried (1803–1879), German architect, beautiful monument

4. Severn, Joseph (1793–1879), British Consul in Rome, painter, devoted friend and deathbed companion of John Keats

6. Shelley, William (1816–1819), son of

29. Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792–1822), the famous English poet

112. Simmons, Franklyn (1839–1913), American sculptor and painter and his wife

112. Simmons, Ella née Bourne Slocum (1847–1905)

22. Story, William Wetmore (1819–1895), famous American sculptor and poet, ("Angel of Grief"), and his wife

22. Story, Emelyn (1820–1895)

55. Strohl-Fern, G.A. (1847–1927), painter and humanist from Alsace

25. Symonds, John Addington (1840–1893), English writer, poet, historian of the Italian Renaissance, critic

8a. Synnot, Sir Walter (1742–1821), from Armagh, Ireland

102. Takanen, Johannes (1849–1885), Finnish sculptor

13. Temple, lady née Elisa Watson (–1809), famous beauty from Massachusetts, married to Sir Grenville Temple. Outstanding monument (1810) by the Swedish sculptor E.G. Göthe

28. Trelawney, Edward J. (1793–1881), faithful friend and companion of Shelley

60. Vedder, Elihu (1836–1925), American painter and poet

92. Vivian, Lord Hussey Crespigny (1834–1893), British ambassador in Rome

45. Waiblinger, Wilhelm (1804–1830), German poet from Heilbronn

7. Werpup, George Antony Fred. (1740–1765), student from Hannover, killed in an accident, son of Baron Werpup, Minister of Hannover to the Holy See

76. Winterbotham, Henry (1837–1873), member of Parliament and Under Secretary of State at the age of 36

66. Woodward, Rev. Francis Blake (1801–1866), founder of the Anglican Church in Rome

31. Wordsworth, William (1835–1917), scholar and poet, the famous poet William Wordsworth's grandson

62. Wurts, George W. (1843–1928), American ambassador to Berlin and his wife

62. Wurts-Tower, Henrietta (1856–1933), American, donated Villa Sciarra-Wurts on the Gianicolo to the city of Rome

34. Wyatt, Richard (1795–1850), well-known London sculptor

Mohammad Hossein Naghdi, Iranian Resistance leader in Italy assassinated in Rome (16-3-1993)

NOTES

The entire proceeds from the sale of this guide-book will go to the Administration to help maintain the Cemetery.

The guide-book has been published by the Administration of the Cemetery.

The photographs on the cover and on the pages 11-32 are, with a few exceptions, taken by the photographer Massimo Ascani.

The photograph on the front of the cover shows part of the "parte antica" of the Cemetery with the Cestius Pyramid; the stone slab in the foreground bears the name of Ruth Milles, a Swedish sculptor. The back of the cover shows the cypress walk leading from the main entrance to the Chapel.

The older pictures from the different parts of the Cemetery have most kindly been placed at our disposal by among others Baron Basile Lemmerman, Gabinetto delle Stampe in the Museo di Roma, Palazzo Braschi, and the Museo Napoleonico.

For the maintenance of this place hallowed by history and association the Administration is entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions. The Cemetery has no endowment and receives no financial assistance from any governmental or municipal entity or any institution. It suffered serious financial damage during the second World War, from which it has not yet recovered.

The Administration ventures to hope that among the thousands who every year are prompted to visit the Cemetery there will be many who are also moved to help in its perpetuation. Contributions are most welcome and may be made through any Embassy or Legation in Rome or directly to the Management of the Cemetery, 45, Via Nicola Zabaglia - 00153 Rome-Italy, or to the Entrance of the Cemetery, 6, Via Caio Cestio, 00153 Rome-Italy, in the post box.
Telephone/Fax: 06.57.41.900

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